shortage is responsible for backlog of cases and it reveals that the vacancies, both in the High Courts and District Courts, have had a direct bearing on the pendency of cases which has shown an increase over the quarters January-March and April-July, 2007;

(b) if so, whether Government has considered the report; and

(c) if so, by when Government is likely to increase or at least fill the present vacant posts in High Courts and District Courts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) The Supreme Court has not sent any such report to the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Law Commission of India in its 120th report submitted in 1987 examined the question of judges' strength and suggested that the judges' strength which was 10.5 judges per 10 lakh of population at that time, had to be increased to 50 judges per 10 lakh of population within a period of 5 years. The Standing Committee of Parliament in its 85th Report submitted in February, 2002 endorsed the ratio recommended by the Law Commission. This issue was also discussed in a Joint Conference of Chief Justices chaired by the Chief Justice of India. In its judgement dated 21st March, 2002, in WP (Civil) No. 1022 of 1989, the Supreme Court directed increasing judges' strength to 50 judges per 10 lakh of population in a phased manner. Insofar as the judges' strength in the High Courts is concerned, Government reviews the matter triennially and after the last such review, Government has recently increased the strength of judges in the High Courts by 152 posts bringing the approved strength of judges in 21 High Courts to 944. The proposals for appointment of judges to the High Courts are to be initiated by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

Administration of justice up to the High Courts is a matter falling within the domain of responsibilities of the State Governments and it is for the respective State Government to decide on the matters of increase of posts of judges in the District Courts and filling up of vacant posts of judges in consultation with their respective High Courts. The Government has, however, from time to time taken up the matter of upgrading the judicial infrastructure with the State Governments. The matter of manpower shortage of non-judicial posts in High Courts and District Courts is within the domain of their respective High Courts and the State Governments.

With a view to reducing the pendency of cases in various courts, Government has taken many steps like that of setting up of Fast Track Courts, providing assistance to the State Governments and UTs for development of infrastructure of judiciary and has under implementation a scheme of computerization of all District and Subordinate Courts of the country and thereby enabling the linking of the lowest court of the country to the highest court electronically.

Declaration of assets by judges

661. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a resolution passed unanimously on the 7th May, 1997, at a meeting chaired by then Chief Justice of India and attended by twenty-two Supreme Court judges, had

reportedly said, "every judge should make declaration of all assets in the form of real estate or investments held in their names, in the name of their spouses or any other person dependent on them, to the Chief Justice";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) whether Government proposes to bring forward the Judges Inquiry Bill, 2006, in this regard, during the winter session of Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Judges (Inquiry), Bill, 2006, which *inter-alia* provided for setting up of a National Judicial Council to probe into the allegations of misconduct against the Judges, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 19.12.2006. The Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice which has since given its Report. The Report of the Standing Committee is being examined.

Exemption to retired judges from enquiry against misconduct

662. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to exempt retired judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts from any probe into the allegations of misconduct against them during their tenures;

(b) whether this matter was referred by Government to a panel of Members of Parliament who are reportedly against shield for ex-judges;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) whether Government proposes to bring forward the Judges Inquiry Bill, 2006, which was introduced in Parliament last year, during the Winter Session?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (d) The Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006, which *inter-alia* provided for setting up of a National Judicial Council to probe into the allegations of misconduct against the judges, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 19.12.2006. The Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice which has since given its Report. The Report of the Standing Committee is being examined.

Complaints against judges

†663. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the type of complaints received during the last five years and till date against the judges of Supreme Court and High Courts; and

(b) the details of main recommendations of the Law Commission regarding the investigation of these complaints against the judges of these courts?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.